

# Reduce Your Risk of **Melanoma** Skin Cancer

## HOLIDAYING AT HOME OR ABROAD?

Occasional, intense sun exposure and sunburn increases melanoma risk.



**377**  
people were  
diagnosed  
with melanoma  
in 1994

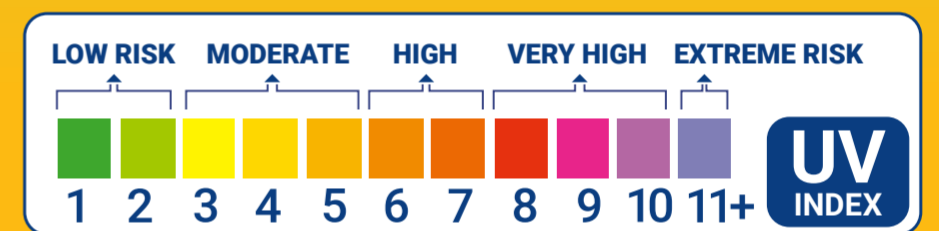
**RISING INCIDENCE  
OF MELANOMA**

**1,263**  
people were  
diagnosed with  
melanoma in 2021



### Enjoy the Sun safely. Be SunSmart:

Make sun protection part of your daily routine, particularly when the **UV index is 3 or above**. Even when it is cloudy! Stay safe by limiting time in the midday sun when UV is strongest, typically between the hours of **11am-3pm**.



### Know your skin type!

The effects of sunlight are not the same for everyone

A person's natural skin colour influences their sensitivity to ultraviolet radiation (UV) in sunlight and skin cancer\* risk, and can be broadly classified on a scale – the **Fitzpatrick Skin Type Scale**, which ranges from 1 (high risk) to 6 (low risk). It considers skin colour (lightest to darkest), and how the skin reacts to sunlight (whether it burns easily, or tans).

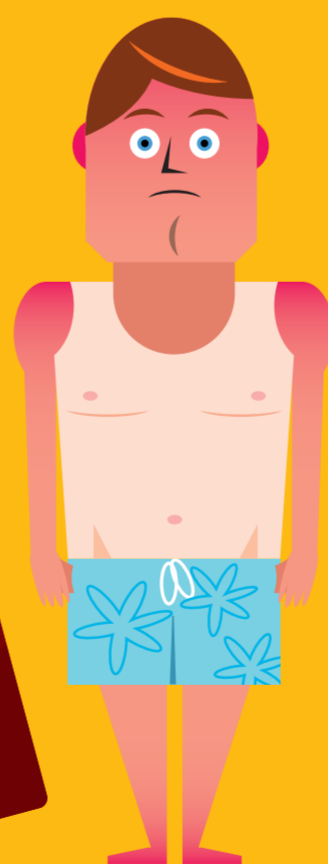
#### THE FITZPATRICK SKIN TYPE CLASSIFICATION



Most people living in Ireland have pale/light skin – Fitzpatrick skin type 1 or 2. People with these skin types burn easily and tan poorly so are particularly vulnerable to UV damage and, as a result, are at a higher risk of skin cancer.

### Reduce your risk: protect & inspect your skin

You can reduce your risk of melanoma by avoiding overexposure to UV from sunlight or artificial sources e.g. sunbeds. **If you are concerned about a change or growth on your skin, you should always see your doctor.**



### Remember the five 'Ss' of sun safety:

- Seek** shade to avoid direct sunlight e.g. under cover of a sun umbrella or trees. Use a sunshade on buggies / prams.
- Slip** on clothing: Cover skin as much as possible e.g. wear long sleeves, collared t-shirts, clothes made from close-woven material that does not allow sunlight through.
- Slap** on a hat with a wide (7cm+) brim and a UPF<sup>+</sup> rating of 50: Protect your face, ears and neck.
- Slop** on broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30+ for adults and 50+ for children, with high UVA protection, and water resistant. Reapply regularly.
- Slide** on sunglasses with UV protection: Guard your eyes from harm.

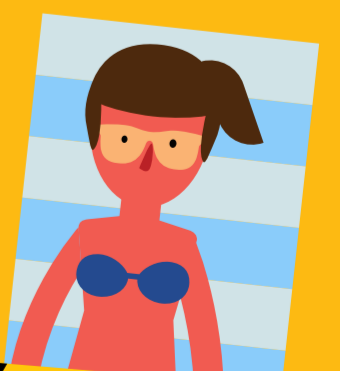
#### Protect your family:

Babies and young children are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of overexposure to the sun. Keep babies and children out of direct sunlight.

#### Remember:

Do not deliberately suntan. Avoid sunbathing/sunburning. Never ever use a sunbed!

There is **no safe limit** for exposure to UV from sunbeds.‡



More information at:  
[irishskin.ie/sunsmart](http://irishskin.ie/sunsmart), [hse.ie/sunsmart](http://hse.ie/sunsmart) and [ncri.ie](http://ncri.ie)

\*Skin cancer is the abnormal, uncontrolled growth of skin cells. Of the different types of skin cancer, melanoma is not the most common but raises the greatest concern as if not detected early, it can spread to other parts of the body where it becomes difficult to treat and can be fatal. Early identification and removal of a melanoma gives the best opportunity for cure.

‡Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) indicates how much of the Sun's UV rays (both UVA and UVB) the clothing allows to reach the skin; a higher rating indicates better protection e.g. UPF 50 blocks ~98% of the Sun's UVB rays, so significantly reducing UV exposure for the skin covered by that fabric.

§Source: SCHEER (Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks), Opinion on Biological effects of ultraviolet radiation relevant to health with particular reference to sunbeds for cosmetic purposes, © European Union 2017.

